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ABSTRACT

According to Federal land appraisals, the land surrounding the Pineville community in Delaware County, Oklahoma, was "unfit for any use," but to the Cherokee who lived there it was a land of plenty. In 1875 Cherokee families constructed a log meeting house, which served first as a church and became a school in 1893. The 1880 Cherokee Census indicated the presence of 107 tribal schools; a high degree of literacy, with half the people speaking English; and farming as the main occupation. In 1899 the Board of Education published "Instructions to the Directors and Teachers of the Primary Schools of the Cherokee Nation." Two more schools were built near Pineville in 1904 and 1907, and by 1908 nearly all of Delaware County's 64 schools districts had a school in operation. During the Great Depression, Cherokees continued to live off the land. In 1937 a community house was built where the Indian Farm Women's club met twice a week to quilt and sew. They also canned thousands of quarts of fruit and vegetables, held holiday events, and had singing conventions. By 1939 their Oak Hill school reached the highest academic rating. A report for 1940-41 listed 17 community projects sponsored by the school. Community members and students chopped wood, grew a garden, butchered pigs, and canned food for the school. Cherokee volunteered for both World Wars, and during World War II the schoolchildren sold War Stamps. Descendants of the first families still live in the community, where they are restoring an old school for community use. (Contains 31 references.) (TD)

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CHEROKEE QUARTERLY

A journal of Cherokee history & culture
Fall-Winter 2001

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A History of the Piney Community

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Cherokee Quarterly
A journal of Cherokee history & culture
Fall-Winter 2001

Editor:	Jody Flippo
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The *Cherokee Quarterly* is a journal dedicated to sharing knowledge and understanding of Cherokee history and culture. It is published four times a year (March, June, September, and December) by the Territorial Book Foundation. The journal is published in two formats. Single-page stories are printed on cover stock and drilled to fit a standard three-ring binder. A black binder is available with cover and spine art depicting the original seal of the Cherokee Nation. Issues covering a single topic, such as baskets and needlework, are bound booklets.

Subscriptions Rates: One year (4 issues) $25. Back Issues (collection of 48 stories from the first four years of publication): $60 with binder, $50 without binder. Subscribers outside the US add $10. Subscription inquiries and other correspondence should be sent to :

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A History of the Piney Community

Compiled by Mary O'Brien

Oak Hili Community House. NARA - SW Region (FW).

Cherokee Quarterly
Fall-Winter 2001
Territorial Book Foundation
Tulsa, Oklahoma

INTRODUCTION

Trouble with Documents - What to destroy and what to save in the way of old documents, newspapers and other publications, has become a question requiring most serious thought. A bill was recently introduced in parliament to enable the trustees of the British museum to distribute or destroy "valueless printed matter in their possession." To this proposal a Shakespearean scholar of prominence...argued that no one could discriminate between what may be valuable and what valueless for the historical investigator of the future. Who knows but that the trade circular, the country newspaper, or the street song, may throw a most important light several hundred years hence upon some mooted question of our present life?

Tahlequah Arrow, 12 January 1901

John Alden writes that by 1763 the Cherokee "realized the wisdom of safekeeping the letters and other documents sent or given to them by the British, for they had lost more than one dispute to the British because the whites were able to produce writings to support their contentions." Oconostota was custodian of this earliest known Cherokee archive which was captured by the Americans in the winter of 1781.

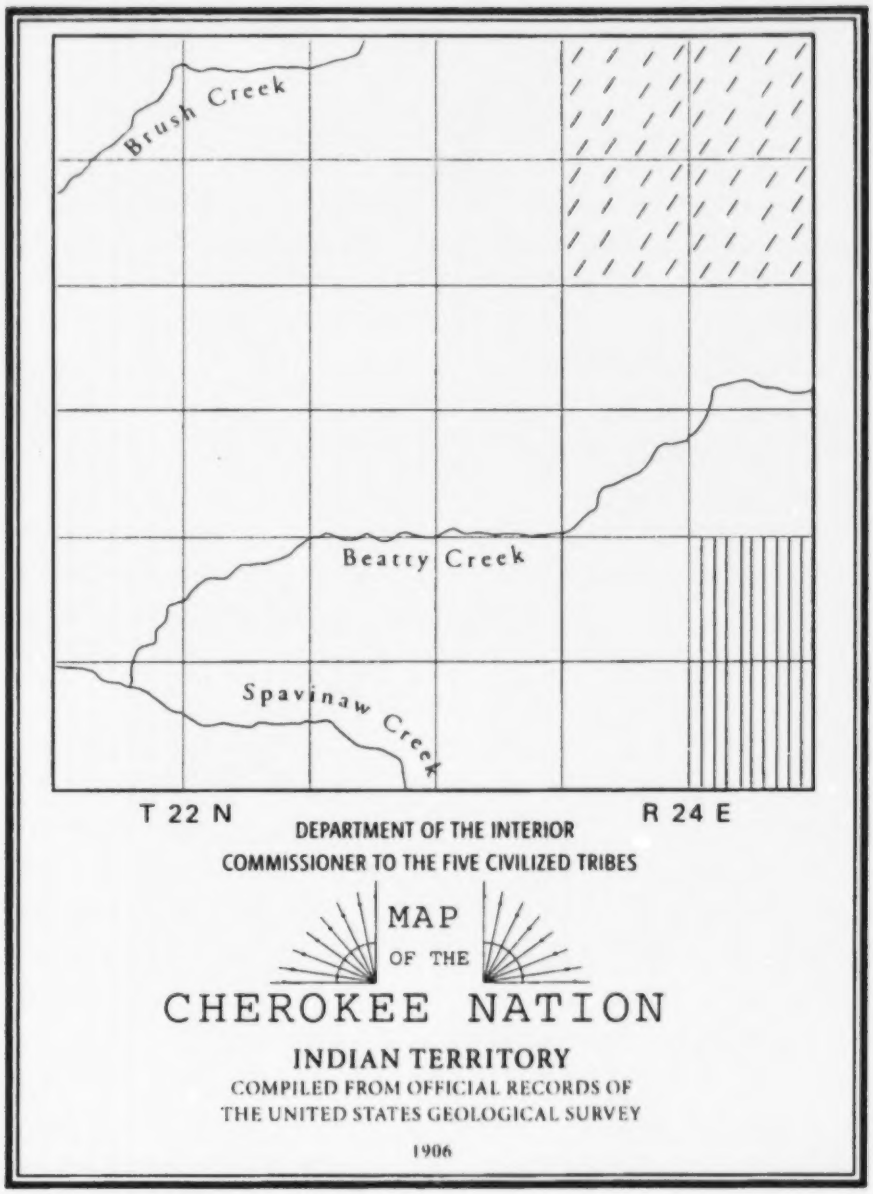
Over 100 years later, distrust of the United States was noted as the reason for the Cherokees' carefully maintained tribal rolls. The 1890 Census Report states, "Each of the Five Tribes takes a census very often; some every 5 years, some oftener. The peculiar method of government in the nations, whereby the authorities at the several capitals are kept advised by the Light Horse (police), or town, county, or district authorities of changes, enables them to keep fairly authentic lists of the population. This is done chiefly for the purpose of resisting the claims of persons desiring to be known as citizens of the tribes and participants in land divisions and the money to be divided between these Indians on account of sales of surplus lands. The citizens of The Five

Tribes watch with a jealous eye each movement of the United States or its agents, as questions of vast moment are pending. It is only possible to estimate the agricultural and industrial products of The Five Civilized Tribes by the observation of the special agents and enumerators. The Indians were very reluctant to give any information in regard to their land holdings, the area cultivated, products, or individual wealth." The Cherokee Nation gathered similar information in 1890 and compiled its own census.

This issue is dedicated to the record keepers of Delaware County, who routinely collect "printed matter" pertaining to the area: Rose Stauber, Grove Public Library; Jackie Marteney, Mariee Wallace Museum in Jay; the *Delaware County Journal*; and the late Virgil Talbot, Talbot Library & Museum in Colcord. Barbara Rust, Archivist for the National Archives in Fort Worth, was especially helpful in locating material pertaining to the Piney Community.

This study of the Pineville community is not a definitive history of the community but merely a compilation of facts and minutia gleaned from local newspaper clippings; records kept by government agents, schoolteachers, and the Cherokee Nation; and family narratives published in *Heritage of the Hills*. However, it shows the diversity of records available and their value in reconstructing our history.

Mary O'Brien



APPROXIMATE CLASSIFICATION

Hilly and Rocky Land | Mountain Land | Agricultural Land

Map by Meghan Woods. Redrawn from "Department of the Interior Commissioner to the Five Civilized Tribes Map of the Cherokee Nation, Compiled from Official Records of The United States Geological Survey, 1906."

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General Description of Tp. 22 N., R. 24 E. - This township is very badly broken and there is but very little land suitable for agricultural purposes. The land along Spavinaw and Beatty Creeks is 2nd class and adaptable to cultivation. The land on the ridges is of a very poor class - 4th rate - and unfit for any use. The township is very well watered through the central portion by Beatty Creek and its numerous small tributaries. The timber in this township is comprised of the various oaks, hickory and pine along the ridges and of the oaks, ash, elm, sycamore and hickory in the bottoms. There are two small saw mills located along Beatty Creek; sawing lumber and shingles. The estimated population of the township is about 275; mostly natives.

H.C. McClure, U.S. Surveyor
R.P. Howell, U.S. Surveyor
March 15th, 1887

HISTORY OF THE PINEY COMMUNITY

In 1875 a group of Cherokee families living along Beatty Creek constructed a log meeting house, which became known as the Pineville Baptist Church. Their first pastor was Reverend Pheasant Tanner, a successful farmer and member of a family prominent in Cherokee politics. The 1880 Cherokee Census identifies some of the families in this area and provides details regarding their economic status. Some of their fruit trees were probably apple trees, as John M. Smith and Rev. John B. Jones promoted their nurseries of apple trees in the *Cherokee Advocate* as early as 1871.

The Council appointed a committee to examine the census rolls for accuracy and to make recommendations. Aaron Tanner, uncle of Pheasant Tanner, represented Delaware District in the Council and was a member of this committee. Delaware District, with 806 children, was allocated fifteen primary schools, none of which were near Pineville. Lucy Young Beaver enrolled her son, Seladin Owens, in the primary department of the Cherokee Male Seminary.

Chief Bushyhead sent a summary of the 1880 Cherokee Census to the Congress of the United States. On January 17, 1881, he wrote: "Among the statistics it will be observed that the number of children attending schools and seminaries is equal to attendance in the adjoining schools, while the number of acres in cultivation, and products of corn, wheat, cotton, and potatoes, will compare favorably with them, although this census was taken in the year of drouth. During the war our great herds of cattle were stolen or destroyed, and we are but recovering from the effects of it. In a very few years our livestock will be fully up to the grazing capacity of those portions of our reserved lands not in cultivation. About one-half of our people can speak the English language, and, as in our 107 schools the English language is now the only medium by law, in one generation this distinction may be expected to pass away. The occupations of all our people are given, and it will be seen that only sixteen are hunters and five fishermen, the farmers being 3,549 in a population of 5,169 males over eighteen.

"Our own system of law and land tenure are admirably suited to our people. The statements made to you that we, or any of the Indians, are communists, and hold property in common, are entirely erroneous. The improvements on farms may be, and often are, sold; they may descend in families for generations, and so long as occupied cannot be invaded, nor for two years after abandonment. These farms and lots are practically just as much the property of the individuals as yours are. The only difference between your land systems and ours is that the unoccupied surface of the earth is not a chattel to be sold and speculated in by men who do not use it."

He concluded, "We submit these statistics to you to show you that the allegations made to you and the press by interested persons who wish to seize our country - that we are not progressing, and that we do not use our country - are entirely false and erroneous."

In 1893, a school was authorized for Pineville. Pheasant Tanner, Ben O. Field, and Dock Gooden comprised the first Board of Directors. Classes were held in a log building, which may have been the same log building used by the church. Forty students were enrolled - half male and half female. Twelve were under ten years of age and twenty-eight were between ten and eighteen. The 1896 Cherokee Census identified several parents in the community with children who were of school age in 1893: Dock and Bettie Gooden, Simon and Kate Johnson, Simon's sister Rachel and her husband Wilson Simlin, Ben and Anna O. Fields, Joe and Lizzie Coming, John and Jennie Oodeleda, Pheasant and Betsy Tanner, and William Turner, who married Aaron Tanner's widow Nellie.

The teacher, Daniel R. Gourd, was born at Tahlequah and was educated at the Cherokee Male Seminary. His mother Kate Wolfe, now married to Simon Johnson, lived at Pineville, and two of the students were probably Mr. Gourd's half-sisters, Annie and Maud Johnson. Mr. Gourd and his wife Lulu built their home on Beatty Creek east of Ben O. Field's trading post, and their first child Louis was born here in 1894.

SCHEDULE1. CENSUS OF DELAWARE DISTRICT, CHEROKEE NATION, 1880.

PERSON ENTITLED TO AND EXERCISING CITIZENSHIP									IMPROVEMENTS AND FARMS, 1880.											
													TOTAL ACRES IN CULTIVAITON							
NAMES	Native or Adopted	Race or Prior Nationality	AGE	SEX	OCCUPATION	Can Read	Can Write	Married Yes or No	Dwellings	Other Structures	No. of Farms	Total No of Acres Enclosed	Corn	Wheat	Oats	Cotton	Fruit Trees	POTATOES	
																		Irish	Sweet
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Aaron Tanner	N	Cher	46	M	Farmer	Yes	No	Yes	1	1	2	6	6				33		
Watt Horsefly	N	Cher	37	M	Farmer	Yes	Yes	Yes	1	1	2	16	16				50		
Chu nu ler hunsk	N	Cher	29	M	Farmer	No	No	Yes	1	2	1	40	31	9			17		
Sam Johnson	N	Cher	38	M	Farmer	No	No	Yes	2	1	1	6	6	10			20		
Pheasant Tanner	N	Cher	31	M	Farmer	No	No	Yes	2	2	2	38	38				56		
Ben O. Fields	N	Cher	22	M	Farmer	No	No	Yes	1	1	1	10	10						
Isaac Turner	N	Cher	44	M	Farmer	Yes	No	No	1	2	2	40	38	2			15		
Lucy Young Beaver	N	Cher	30	F		No	No	No	1	2									

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FARM PRODUCTS OF 1979									LIVESTOCK, No. HEAD				
NUMBER OF BUSHELS							Pounds	Tons					
NAMES	Corn	Wheat	Oats	POTATOES Irish	POTATOES Sweet	Turnips	Seed Cotton	Hay	Cattle	Hogs	Sheep	Mules	Horses
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33
Aaron Tanner				2						20		8	1
Walt Horsefly	60								2	40			1
Chu nu ler hunsk	130	17	27						4		20		6
Sam Johnson										10	3		2
Pheasant Tanner	20	19					10			20			3
Ben O. Fields	100									5	5		1
Isaac Turner	150								12	40	12		5
Lucy Young Beaver									2	15			2

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School board member, Ben O. Field, was the grandson of Old Field and of James D. Wofford. Old Field, one of Chief John Ross' most trusted friends, lived with his two wives and thirteen children at Candy's Creek, Tennessee, in 1835. Two of his daughters were enrolled in the mission school as Jane and Sally Field. In the West, Old Field or Oldfield was generally used as the family surname. Family members shortened it to O. Field, and then O'Field. James Wofford assisted Evan Jones, the Baptist missionary, in compiling a Cherokee spelling book. Their effort was discontinued when Sequoyah, who was a cousin of Mr. Wofford's mother, created the Cherokee syllabary. James Mooney was so impressed with Mr. Wofford's knowledge of Cherokee history that he quoted him extensively in his *Myths of the Cherokees*. Mr. Wofford married Anna Old Field.

Ben O. Field was an entrepreneur. His large two-story trading post, which had four fireplaces, was located on a hill overlooking Beatty Creek. A cave spring located nearby was used to store meat, butter, and milk. Rev. O. Field was the first pastor of the New Point Church and in 1895 was appointed postmaster of a new post office to be located at Fields. The post office, however, never opened and was discontinued later that year.

On July 31, 1899, the Board of Education published "Instructions to the Directors and Teachers of the Primary Schools of the Cherokee Nation." Directors were required to furnish a comfortable house, keep the school supplied with fuel, and provide a suitable desk with lock and key. Teachers were to receive two paid holidays: Thanksgiving and one day for a picnic in the spring term. The teacher's first duty was to "realize that they have the responsibility of molding the characters of the rising generation and fitting them for useful citizenship and therefore, should set an example worthy of emulation." Teachers were encouraged to "Make few rules and enforce them with decision and discretion."

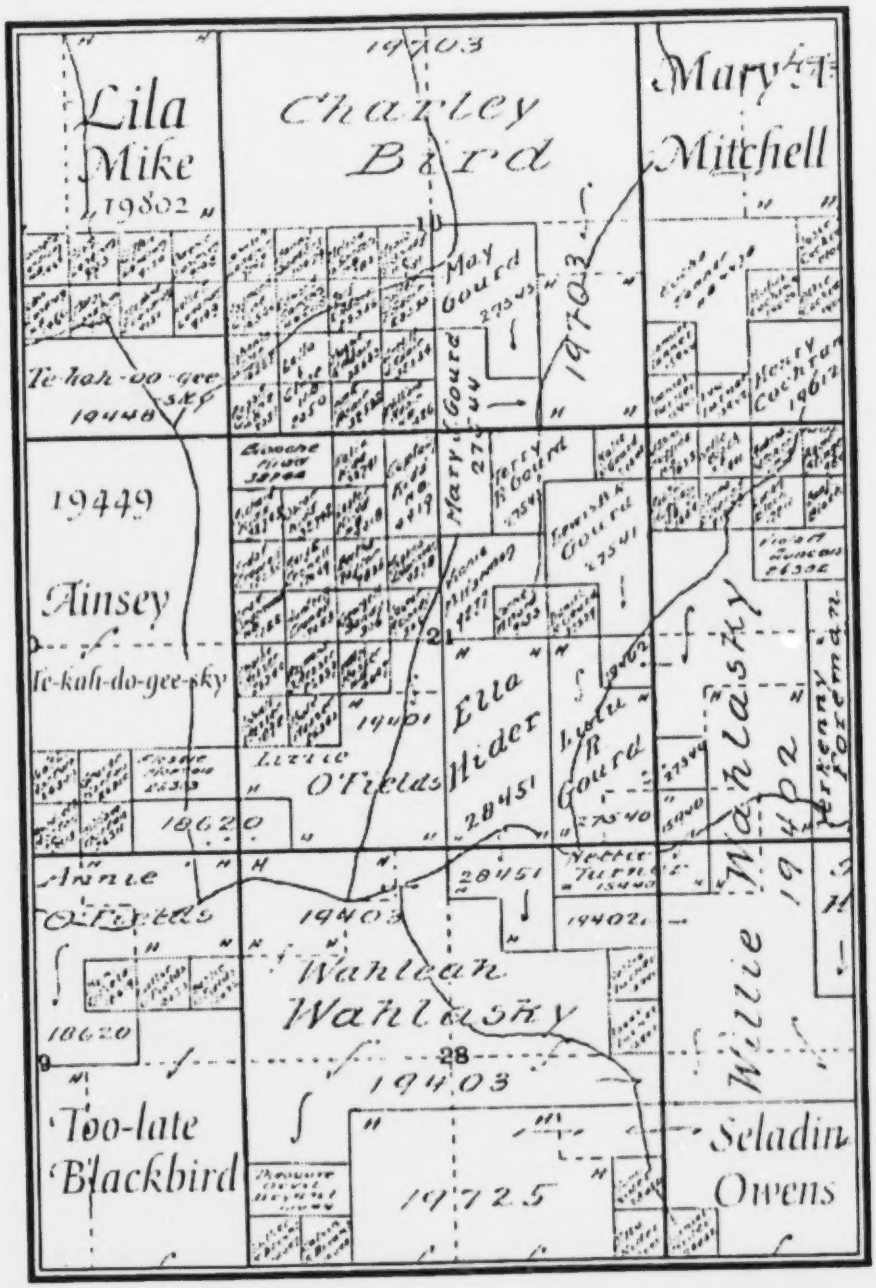
In 1900 a new teacher arrived at Pineville - Stephen Watie Peak. Simon Johnson, Ben O. Field, and Joe Coming, who was married to Ben's cousin Lizzie, now served on the school board. Mr. Peak was born at Vian and attended school at Dwight Mission. After the death of his parents, he was placed at the Cherokee National Orphan Asylum at Salina where he was on the school honor roll. He married one of his students, Maud Johnson, and the couple made their home near Sycamore.

When William Turner and Daniel R. Gourd selected homestead allotments for family members, each man placed the family home in his wife's allotment. Ben O. Field represented his mother Lizzie. Her homestead allotment included her home, while her surplus allotment was selected from the public domain.

In 1904, the Mount Hermon School was built northeast of Pineville, near Sycamore. Their first teacher was Samuel J. Starr of Stilwell, a graduate from the Cherokee National Male Seminary. Steve and Maud Peak's children probably attended this school. In 1907 Taylor School was built on the south side of Beatty Creek. Fathers of children who were students here included Seladin Owens, Charley Sixkiller, and Enoch Wilson. Enoch, the son of Rachel and Wilson Simlin, took Wilson for his surname.

When Oklahoma became a state in 1907, Stephen Peak became the first county school superintendent for Delaware County and served in this position until 1910. The *Delaware County Journal* reported that "without funds, without supplies, without precedent to go by, he laid out the districts, found teachers, planned school buildings, and laid a firm foundation" for the rural schools in Delaware County. He made the "first map of Delaware County, showing section lines, rivers, creeks, and principal land marks, and the location of the school houses, as well as the boundaries of the sixty four School Districts" and had "practically every school in operation by the first of January 1908."

In 1918, Haskell Institute dedicated the June issue of *The Indian Leader* to the American Indian and the World War. Louis R. Gourd, son of Dan and Lulu, contributed an essay



Allotment Map

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entitled "The Native American in the World War." "Why does the red man fight for democracy? The Indian weeps today for devastated Belgium, and his sorrow for France is that of a real brother. He has entered this war and is going to stay in it until the pit-a-pat of his moccasins is heard Unter den Linden. There are more than 5,000 Indian young men under arms today, and more than 85 per cent of them are volunteers. Thus we get an idea of the percentage who see the righteousness of our cause. He comes to the conflict ready to share in the dangers, sacrifices, and honors of those who fight and suffer untold agonies that freedom may continue to be an ideal of mankind."

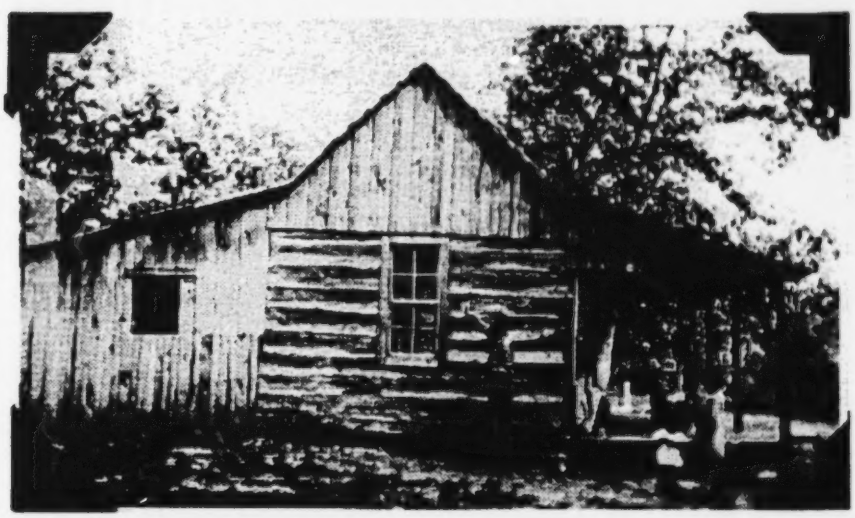
Audrey and Callie Roberts lived on Beatty Creek from 1914 to 1924. Their children attended school in the small, unpainted frame schoolhouse built in 1911 near the Pineville Church. About 1922, Audrey and his son Vestal, with Jim Swindler built a new Piney School - one mile west of the church and near the O'Field Trading Post. The one-room frame building was painted white with blue trim and had a well.

The stock market crashed in 1929 and by 1931 the Great Depression was reaching its nadir. Cherokees continued to live off the land. Everyone had a garden and supplemented their diet with fish, crawdads, squirrels, mushrooms, berries, and nuts. The Farm Agent reported that Enoch Wilson "bedded out" twenty-six bushels of sweet potatoes and received as pay "all the slips he needed. About 50,000 plants were slipped from this bed and distributed to indigent Indians in this district." The *Jay Record* reported school activities including a Valentine Day Party and an Easter basket dinner and egg hunt.

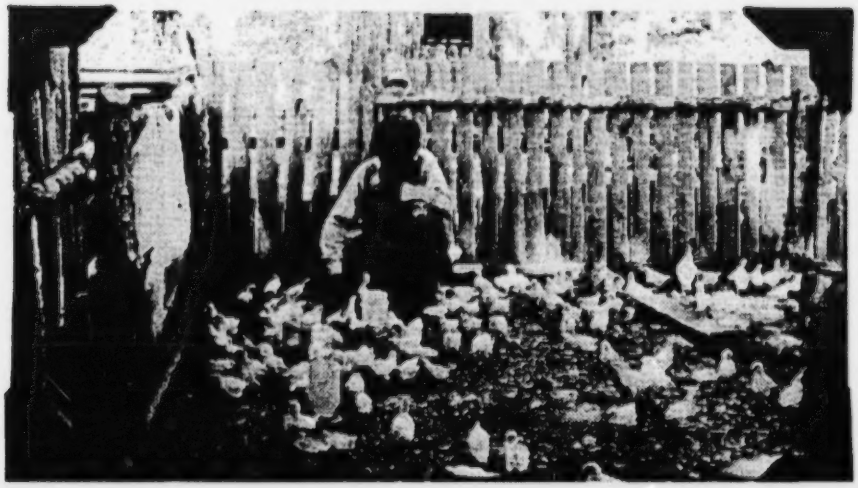
By 1932, around twelve million people were unemployed and there were soup kitchens and breadlines in the cities. In Delaware County, however, the Indian Farm Agent, F.W. Kirch, sponsored the purchase of four large-size pressure cookers, which were passed from home to home. Awards were given to the Cherokee who canned, cured, or dried the most for "winter use" and who saved the "most seed from his or her garden."

Franklin Delano Roosevelt took oath on March 4, 1933. "America hasn't been as happy in three years as they are today," wrote Will Rogers in his column on March 5. "No money, no banks, no work, no nothing, but they know they got a man in there who is wise to Congress, wise to our so-called big men. The whole country is with him." The last of March, Agent Kirch distributed free seed and apple trees. The first week of April he delivered certified Reed Yellow Dent seed corn to Jacob Tanner, grandson of Pheasant Tanner; Silas Bohannon, son-in-law of Dan R. Gourd; and Woodrow Peak, son of Steve Peak.

November 23, 1933, the U.S. Government purchased ten acres of timberland located in Section 15, T22N, R24E from Henry Cochran for $100.00 as the site for a Special Indian Day School. Plans were developed for construction of a series of buildings to "provide opportunities for (1) the Indian children in this full blood community to receive adequate school facilities (2) Indian teachers to render service to their race and (3) community center to serve all the people, both children and adults."



Steve Peak of Sycamore secured a little work with the Delaware County Rehabilitation organization and made good use of his earnings constructing this new log cabin, 1935. NARA - SW Region (FW).



Silas Bohannon, Jr., and his father are partners in the poultry business. They hatched about 250 white leghorns this spring. Silas Jr. is a serious 4-H Club worker and a junior in high school at Jay, 1935. NARA - SW Region (FW).

"A large portion of houses in this jurisdiction are of a home-made nature, cut from native timbers on our wooded areas," Field Agent A.I. Gilkison wrote in his Annual Report for 1935. "Our Indians are expert ax-men and cut out timbers almost on a par with much mill work. The clap-board is still the prevalent shingle in use here. Most of the fireplaces are constructed of native stone." Kerr Glass representatives held a canning demonstration in May at Mt. Hermon School and Ethel Gourd, daughter of Dan and Lulu R. Gourd, held another in August.

Singing conventions became increasingly popular. The Peak Brothers Quartet conducted singing schools and Curtis Peak, son of Steve and Maud, organized and promoted the conventions. September 26, 1935, the correspondent from Mt. Hermon wrote, "Our singing last Wednesday night was well attended. A number of singers from surrounding districts were in our midst and folks we made the 'Charming Melodies.' We had almost a convention." The songbook *Charming Melodies* could be purchased by writing the Secretary of the convention, Curtis Peak.

Oak Hill School. NARA - SW Region (FW)

The Oak Hill Special Indian Day School, a one-room school constructed of native stone, was completed in the fall of 1935. The teacher, Wynona Starr, was a daughter of Samuel J. Starr, the first teacher at Mount Hermon over thirty years earlier. Among the thirty-two students were the grandchildren of Will and Nellie Turner and Dan and Lulu R. Gourd. By the end of the first year, Miss Starr had organized a "Better speech club; 4-H club; current events, debate and glee club." Her pupils also engaged in a "basketball tournament and other matched games, county spelling contest, trips to the woods to gather flowers and study birds, [and] building bird houses."

By November 1935, many men in the Piney community were employed on WPA projects at Little Kansas and Brush Creek. Furniture making became a source of income for some. Isaac Turner and Houston Sixkiller knew the traditional art of weaving with hickory splints. Using a pocketknife, they would cut the "bark" into one-inch strips and use it to weave chair seats.

In June of 1936, the Project Manager of Indian Relief and Rehabilitation acquired salvage from Civilian Conservation Corps Camps and set up a sewing room, where women mended comforts and blankets, repaired and patched clothing, and

darned socks. Badly worn items were recycled. Wool pants were taken apart, the fabric dyed, and made into clothing for women and children. Socks were unraveled, dyed, and knitted into caps, small sweaters, and booties. But quilts were the most ingenious product of the women's industrious and frugal nature. Scraps from army coats and blankets were pieced into quilt tops. Cotton from badly worn comforts was used for the batting, and comfort covers were used to back the quilt. Quilts were then tacked with yarn from unraveled socks. The smallest scraps were used in hooked rugs.

The mended clothing and bedding were intended for those Indians who were unable to make repairs for themselves - children, invalids and old people. These women also aided in making garments from new material for Indian children in the State School for the Blind.

When the 1936-37 school term began, Ezra Feather was elected president of the 4-H Club. Frances Bohannon was vice-president and Callie Abercrombie was secretary. At the Delaware County Fair, 1st place awards went to Frances for her dresser set, Callie for canned fruit, John Tanner for onions, and Calvin Turner for his wheat exhibit. 2nd place awards were received by Frances for tomatoes, Lorene Tanner for honey, and J.D. Turner for huckleberries.

By 1937, some families began moving to California and Colorado in search of employment, but Bob and Louise Wilson moved back to Piney. Louise was the daughter of Ross and Annie Oodeleda, and for the next twelve years, her family would be active in all community affairs. In March, Albert Exendine, Reorganization agent of the Indian Bureau, was in Jay to explain the Indian Welfare Act. Louis R. Gourd served as interpreter. Mr. Gourd and Cherry Hanna were selected to fill the new positions of Indian Farm Aid.

The Oak Hill community house was completed and dedicated in May of 1937. Jack Kilpatrick played the piano at the official dedication ceremony. The building, which consisted of an auditorium large enough to hold community gatherings and a kitchen for use in serving lunches to the school, cost $7802.23. It had a diesel unit for lights, a well and storage tank for water supply, and a wood stove for heat.

Oak Hill Community House, 1937. A corner of the large hall where meetings are held and the women sew. The mural is by Cherokee artist Cecil Dick. NARA - SW Region (FW)

Getting ready for a canning demonstration at the Community house. Several thousand quarts of fruit and vegetables were canned and stored by the women using this community house, 1937. NARA - SW Region (FW).

Shortly after the beginning of 1937, the Oak Hill Farm Women's Club was organized. Early members included Pearl Abercrombie, Annie Oodeleda, Maud Peak, and Dan and Lulu R. Gourd's daughters Mary Bohannon and Mae Turner. By August, the club had 47 members, some of whom walked several miles through the hills to the meetings. They met twice a week to quilt and sew and twice a month for a business and social meeting. "About 100 quilts have been quilted by them this year," the *Journal* reported, "also many garments have been made in the sewing room. These women are not only interested in sewing - they have canned more than 3000 quarts of fruit and vegetables." Seventy-three members and guests were present at an August business gathering and "plenty of ice cream and cake were served at the social hour."

"The members of the Indian Farm Women's club, under the direction of Mrs. Cherry Hanna, gave a hallow'en masquerade party at the Oak Hill Indian community house, near Piney," according to the *Journal*. "The rhythm band from the Oak Hill school furnished some good entertainment. Games were played during the evening and prizes were awarded for the most appropriate dressed person. About 85 were present."

When the Cave Spring Religious Camp opened in June of 1938, the *Journal* noted, "Added to the natural resources which could scarcely be excelled anywhere in the state, is the 80 by 120 foot Tabernacle and the 60 by 80 foot dining hall, a kitchen, grocery store and cold drink stand. Nearly a hundred cabins have been built and plenty of camping space for tents and trailer houses." Curtis Peak organized a Singing Convention here in 1939, which attracted an estimated three thousand people. The camp was used for meetings and conventions for about three years.

August was a busy month. About 75 people attended the Oak Hill watermelon feast held at the community house. The teacher, Mrs. Wynona Starr Nelson, introduced her new assistant, Elizabeth Alberty. The group played lawn games,

followed by an outdoor song session. The 4-H Club girls remained for a slumber party. On August 25, the first Indian Achievement Day was held at the Oak Hill Community building. The *Journal* estimated attendance at over 400 people. "This fair gave the people of Oak Hill community, and surrounding communities an opportunity to display their work in horticulture, canning, and handicraft for this year. An excellent exhibition of Indian relics was displayed, among them being an old spinning wheel owned by Enoch Wilson." The program included a performance by the Rhythm Band of Oak Hill School, a talk by Lewis R. Gourd, Indian Farm Aid, and songs by a local Indian Choir led by Sam Hider. In October, about 160 people attended the Oak Hill Community Halloween Party with refreshments served by the Oak Hill Farm Women's Club.

"Our school this year reached the peak of academic rating," Mrs. Nelson wrote in 1939. "Each year we have climbed from an accredited school, a model school, to a Superior Model School! Never before has such interest been displayed in our school program. Never before have so many come in to help us with our canning, quilting, and community work. And never before has the cooperative spirit been more noteworthy."

A new opportunity was offered to the community in the spring of 1940 when William A. Ames, Director of Arts and Crafts in Oklahoma for the Indian Bureau came and discussed the possibility of an Indian weaving unit being organized at Oak Hill. A few 45" looms were purchased by the Five Tribes Agency and 62" and 72" large-size looms were made by the Sequoyah Vocational School and the Chilocco School. Weavers included Bob and Louise Wilson and their son Woodrow; Louise's mother Annie Oodeleda; sisters Mary Bohannon and May Turner; Allie Jane Beamer, daughter of Taylor Tanner; Sam Hider's wife Sarah; and Pearl Abercrombie. Orders were received from Alaska to New York City.

Mrs. Nelson's report for 1940-41 began with a list of community projects sponsored by the school: "Indian Achievement Day (our Indian Fair), assisting the Red Cross, our Health Clinic, Halloween Festival, Pie Supper Benefits for

Christmas, Thanksgiving Banquet, Community Christmas Tree and Christmas Program, B.T.U. Study Course, Cherokee Singing Convention, and Wood-For-School program." These projects, plus a Graduation Banquet "were worked out as a community with both young and old having a part in them. At the Banquet the seventh grade boys presented a totem pole, which they had made in typical weird design but used to portray the history of our school since 1935. Our school boys and girls...set out 150 Shortleaf pine trees as a Reforestation project bought with 4-H prize money and won the Sportsmanship Trophy at the County Basketball tournament. Besides these, 106 mattresses have been made the past year in our Community Building; two school pigs were butchered for school lunch; a garden was maintained by our pupils and patrons (also hotbed); and in the Women's Clubwork a total of

Threading the harness - Silas and Frances Bohannon, brother and sister. Silas is assistant to the instructor of weaving. NARA - SW Region (FW).

4,560 quarts were canned for home consumption; 87 quilts were made and quilted, 304 other garments; and 70 Chinese elm trees were set out."

With the beginning of World War II, the activities of the community shifted to include Red Cross and Defense Bonds. "The year's events at Oak Hill include the Community Fair, 4-H club and Women's Club activities," Mrs. Nelson wrote in 1942. "Our school...entered the County Softball Tournament, 4-H Club Rally, County Health Day, and County Spelling Bee. Donations from our community have been made to the USO, Red Cross, Junior Red Cross, Christmas Tuberculosis Seals, and a half-day was spent soliciting 'Buy Defense Bonds and Stamps' pledges. The Women's Club alone, besides contributing to the above, sponsored the 4-H Club, Hot School Lunch Program, Improvement of Cemetery, Home Improvement Campaign, 5 Pink-and-Blue showers, Quilt Raffle, and are now on their 1st Defense Bond which will soon be paid for. Community spirit was evident in the woodcuttings, pie suppers, Thanksgiving dinner, Community Christmas Program and tree, butchering of school pig. The calling of boys of draft age to the colors for service developed much good spirit." WWII veterans from the Piney community included Calvin Turner, Tom Jones, Dave Owens, Charles Sixkiller, D.C. Owens, and Sam Hider.

When the Weaving Project was launched, the Women's Club was discontinued - leaving the school programs without a sponsor. "The outstanding achievement this year was the organization of our PTA to foster the program of the school," Mrs. Nelson wrote in 1943. Bob Wilson was elected president, Pearl Abercrombie as vice-president, and Louise Wilson secretary-treasurer. "This organization has worked on its own, seeing the needs of the school and means of serving on the Home Front here, and fulfilling them as a community. They sponsored a Scrap Drive with 1,833 lbs. scrap iron & 353 lbs. scrap rubber; Red Cross quota of $25; Second Bond Drive of $450; Organization of Neighborhood Fire men to combat forest fires; and dipping of livestock to keep down diseases. The school children as a group sold War Stamps. The PTA group and the school children have worked together in the upkeep of the

school: cleaning of the schoolyard, school-lunch program, school garden, wood for fuel for both buildings, and the Community Christmas Tree and program. Each mother has donated some time and labor in our school garden or in the canning of food for school lunches. The patriotism and school spirit manifest by these, our patrons, are unexcelled."

About this time, Chilocco requested that the weavers purchase their looms so they could be removed from the government list. Mr. Ames made arrangements for the Sequoyah Weavers Association to purchase the looms for $20 apiece and sell them at cost to the weavers. Each weaver was credited so much each month on the labor account until her loom was paid in full.

By 1944, "A Forest Fire Committee was named and each family contributed toward the Bond Drive," according to Mrs. Nelson. "The outstanding work of the leaders was in the Red Cross Drive. The Weaving Project at our school has proved so successful for our women that it is difficult to keep yarn in stock for the women to make the finished products. Of the 12 women participating, four are skilled enough to teach new weavers. They have made many rugs, drapes and other woven articles but their specialty is the designed afghan. Activities the school children participated in include school garden, school chickens, 4-H Club, Junior Red Cross, War Stamp Sales and Bond Sales."

In 1945, the Piney school district was annexed to Jay and the Oak Hill School closed at the end of the 1946-47 school year. Miss Murphy submitted the final report as Mrs. Nelson was in New York: "Both cook wood and heating wood were cut and hauled by patrons of the community. Canned foods were also donated to help with the hot lunch program. The children participated in 4-H Club. A Halloween party and pie supper was held in October to raise money for the community Christmas tree. Another pie supper during November, held also for the Christmas tree was well attended. In March a pie supper for the Red Cross Drive was held. A pie supper to raise money for the cancer drive was held in April. The community Christmas tree was held December 23, 1946, with two hundred

in attendance. Play practice was held three nights per week by the adult patrons for a Christmas play given on the night of the Christmas tree. The Weavers sponsored a show for the Infantile Paralysis Fund. Junior Red Cross gift boxes were filled by the school children and sent to foreign countries. Patrons and the school children plowed, planted, and cultivated the school garden. Garden yield will be canned and used for hot lunches next fall. To date, May 23, ten patrons have picked and canned eighty quarts of wild greens." There would be no "hot lunches next fall" at Oak Hill, as the children would ride buses to schools in Jay. Mrs. Nelson recalled that "For twelve years we had a very successful school teaching the three R's plus extracurricular activities and community programs. We grew early plants for all the community in our sixty-foot hotbed and maintained a school garden to augment our hot lunch program. In this manner we taught thrift as well as a cooking class and dishwashing chores for both boys and girls."

When the school closed, Mrs. Nelson moved to Jay, and Louise Wilson became president of the Oak Hill Weavers. Two years later, Louise and her husband Bob moved to town and Pearl Abercrombie became president. By 1950, the Oak Hill Indian Weavers consisted of only six weavers, but they had a manager and treasurer and four of the weavers owned their own looms. Two small looms, made from junked loom parts were also being used. On July 25, 1955, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs signed a quit claim deed transferring the Oak Hill property to Independent School District 1. Mrs. Abercrombie moved her looms to her home, where she continued to weave until about 1980, when poor health forced her to quit.

Rev. Sam Hider was an important community leader during the second half of the century. Rev. Hider was born November 25, 1907, to Tom and Ella Oldfield Hider of Pineville. By 1950, Rev. Hider was an ordained Baptist minister. He served many years as pastor of the Piney Church and several terms as moderator of the Cherokee Baptist Association. He worked with Chief W.W. Keeler to lay the foundation for the present day Cherokee Nation, taught Cherokee language classes, was a consultant for the *Cherokee Dictionary*, and translated a variety

of material into Cherokee from gospel songs to the *Oklahoma Driver's Manuel*. He was a dynamic gospel song leader and some say he had the most beautiful voice in the Cherokee Nation.

On April 27, 1990, the Cherokee Nation honored Rev. Sam Hider by renaming the Jay Community Health Clinic after him. Chief Wilma Mankiller said "It is only fitting to name the community clinic, a place of healing, after Rev. Hider because he has helped to heal the spirit of so many Cherokees. In Cherokee culture, we are taught to honor and listen to elder members of our tribe. It is in keeping with that tradition that we today honor Rev. Sam Hider. From this day forward, this clinic will be known as the Sam Hider Community Clinic. Years from now our children and our children's children will come to this clinic and be reminded of the contributions of Sam Hider to the Cherokee people."

EPILOGUE

A Land of Plenty

Here's luck to the man who can if he will
Prosper in the valleys of Delaware Hills.

He will have cattle in the pasture, hogs in the pen
Sheep on the range and wheat in the bin.

Fine horses in the stable and money in his pocket
A baby in the cradle, and a pretty wife to rock it.

Corn in the crib, poultry in the yard,
Meat in the smoke house and a big can of lard

Milk in the milk house, cheese on the board,
A little sack of coffee, and sugar in the gourd.

S. W. Peak

According to Federal land appraisals, the land in T22N, R24E was "unfit for any use," but to the Cherokees who lived there it was a "Land of Plenty." Descendants of the first families still live in the community, where they are currently restoring the old Oak Hill Special Indian Day School. "When complete," Will Chavez writes in the *Cherokee Phoenix & Indian Advocate*, "the community will again use the building for things such as pie suppers, Halloween events and holiday gatherings."

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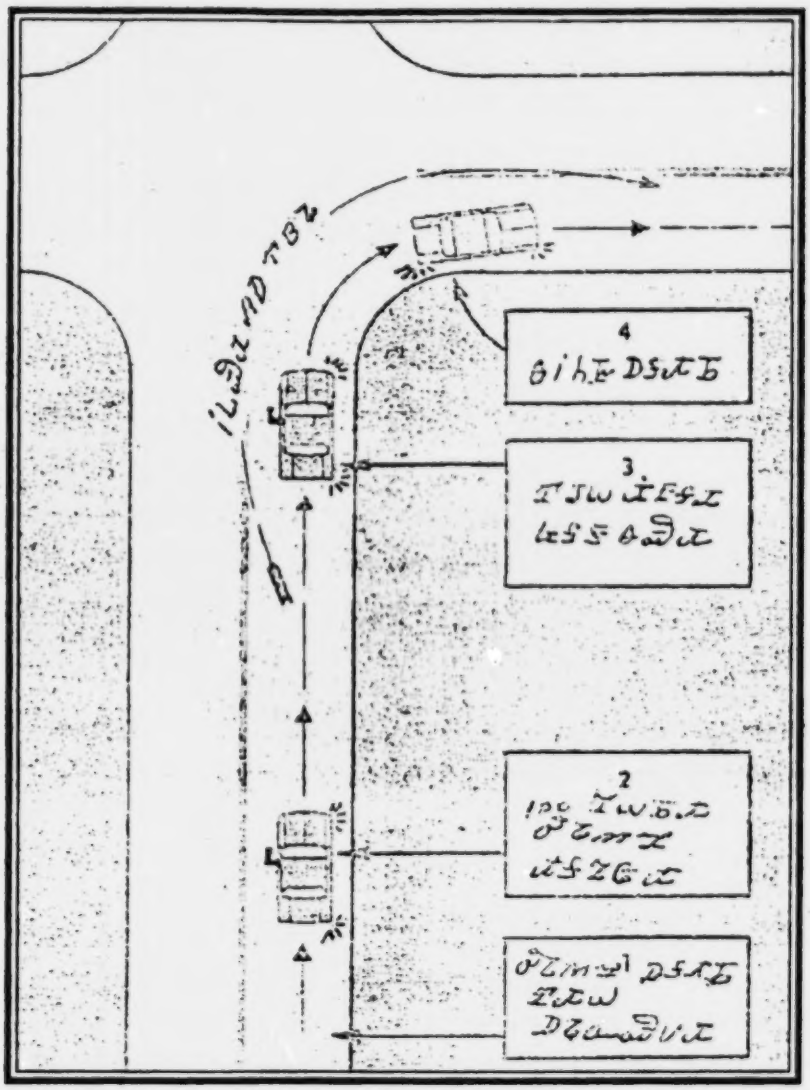
Front cover: Taylor Tanner decided that his old garden was too small so he built a paling fence around an acre plot, 1931. NARA - SW Region (FW).

Back cover: Illustration from Driver's Manual in Cherokee translated by Sam Hider. Special Collections, John Vaughan Library, NSU.



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